

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claims 1-3 and 20 were rejected as being anticipated by Das. Claims 4-19 were found to contain allowable subject matter. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

All of the pending claims in the application were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. The Office Action states that the claims are confusing, vague and indefinite and references certain language with respect to claim 1. While the language of the remaining claims are not discussed, the same language in claim 1 is present in the other claims. Thus, with respect to this rejection, all claims can be considered together. The Office Action states that "claim 1 recites a dust-repelling unit for a laser optical element without recitation of any dust repelling unit structure or a laser optical element structure." Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claim 1 properly recites the structure of the dust repelling unit as including two elements a high-voltage duct and a closed wire loop. The high-voltage duct includes a high-voltage core having two ends and a insulator element disposed around the core. The first end of the high-voltage core is connectable to a high voltage power supply. The second end of the high-voltage core is electrically connected to the closed wire loop. Thus, claim 1 clearly sets forth the structure of the dust repelling unit.

However, the Office Action erroneously references "high voltage dust" and states that the claim does not define how the high voltage "dust" is connected to the dust repelling unit or the laser optical element. The claim does not recite "high voltage dust." Rather, it recites a "high-voltage duct." Thus, the indefinite language recited in the Office Action is the result of a misreading of the claims. When read properly, the structure of the dust repelling unit is clear.

The Office Action further states that the closed wire loop is not shown in any of the figures. Applicant respectfully disagrees. The dust repelling unit is illustrated as element 115 in Fig. 3, 4 and 5. Fig. 3 illustrates the positioning of the dust repelling unit within a gas laser and in front of an optical element 116. Figs. 4 and 5 are front and cross-sectional views of the dust repelling unit. The dust repelling unit includes a high-voltage duct 301 and a closed wire loop 302. The high-voltage duct includes a high-voltage core 304 and an insulator 303. Therefore, the structure recited in the claim is clearly shown in the figures.

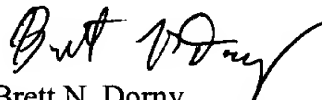
Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The claims properly recite the structures of the dust repelling unit. Furthermore, claims 4-19 recite the relationship between the structures of the dust repelling unit and the gas laser, including the laser optical element. In the interest of furthering prosecution of this application, Applicant has also amended the preamble of claim 1 to recite the relationship between the dust repelling unit of the claim and the gas laser and laser optical element. Therefore, all of the claims properly recite the structures of the claimed invention and are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-3 and 20 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Das. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection because the structures recited in claims 103 and 20 are not disclosed, taught or suggested by Das. As noted above, claim 1 recites a dust repelling unit to be placed in a gas laser unit. The dust repelling unit comprises a high-voltage duct and a closed wire loop at one end of the high voltage duct. Das, on the other hand, does not include such a dust repelling unit nor the structures recited in the claim.

The Office Action does not explicitly indicate the elements in Das which allegedly correspond to the structures of the dust repelling unit of claim 1. However, the Office Action does reference various portions of the disclosure of Das. These portions relate to the high-voltage electrodes of the excimer laser. The optical element is located in an end of the housing as illustrated as element 46 in Fig. 4. The electrodes are not positioned in front of the optical element as recited in claim 1 of the present application. Furthermore, the electrodes do not include a closed wire loop. The only similarity between Das and claim 1 is the use of a high-voltage core for providing a high-voltage within the gas laser. Therefore, claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited art and is in condition for allowance. Claims 2, 3 and 20 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the claims of the present application are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections and favorable action are respectfully requested. If the examiner has any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, she is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney at the number below so that prosecution of this application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,



Brett N. Dorny
Registration No. 35,860
Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris,
Glovsky and Popeo, P.C.
One Financial Center
Boston, Massachusetts 02111
Telephone 617/542-6000
Attorney for Applicant

Date: March 24, 2003

APPENDIX

1. (Twice Amended) A dust repelling unit [for] to be placed within a gas laser unit in front of a laser optical element, comprising:

a high-voltage duct comprising a high-voltage conducting core having a first end and a second end and an insulator element disposed around the core, the first end of the core being connectable to a high voltage power supply; and

a closed wire loop electrically connected to the second end of the high-voltage core.